

# Oswaldkirk Village Plan

## 2014



Dear Villager

In 2005 a decision was made at an Oswaldkirk Village Meeting to draw up a Village Plan to reflect the opinions of villagers in regard to what life was like in Oswaldkirk and how it could be improved. The resulting Plan (see [www.oswaldkirk.org](http://www.oswaldkirk.org)) was then used to achieve the following improvements:

- It was used many times by the Parish Officers when comments were required on planning applications. In particular, it was used extensively when providing feedback on the Conservation Area Action Management Plan.
- It was instrumental in pursuing and getting a speed limit through the village.
- It contributed to the wealth of evidence that helped Oswaldkirk win the Calor Village of the Year Award in 2008.
- It resulted indirectly in the production of the Oswaldkirk Village Information Booklet (see website).

Whilst village plans are not legal documents, local authorities and other planning bodies, such as the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the North York Moors National Park, increasingly recognise them. They also provide a very important tool in identifying the views of residents. Therefore, in 2013 it was agreed by Oswaldkirk Parish Meeting to revisit the Plan with the view of updating it. In order to do this a Steering Committee was constituted to review the original plan to decide which parts needed revisiting. This work was done in consultation with Rural Action Yorkshire (RAY)<sup>1</sup>.

As a result of the discussions with RAY, it was agreed not to revisit the whole plan but to focus on seven key areas, namely:

1. The Village Hall
2. The Playground
3. Footpaths
4. Mobile phone and broadband coverage
5. Preferred means of communication
6. The natural environment and sustainability
7. Policing, emergency services and local health care

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<sup>1</sup> Rural Action Yorkshire contact was Mrs Maggie Farey

In January/February 2014, as a first step in the updating process, the Steering Committee sent a questionnaire relating to these seven aspects to every household in Oswaldkirk.

Thanks to all of you who replied – your contributions are much appreciated.

We have now analysed the findings and the full report is available on the Oswaldkirk website. If you would like to see a paper copy please contact Mark Clook.

**Key results are as follows:**

**Response rate** – 105 questionnaires were distributed of which 45 were returned. This represents a response rate of approximately 43%.

**Village Hall** – The responses to the questionnaire give a clear indication that improvements are necessary, in particular to the kitchen, storage, tables and chairs and to the windows.

**Playground** – The responses indicated the need to consider the possibility of incorporating both adult and child play facilities into the current playground.

**Footpaths** – Various comments were passed regarding general maintenance and improving views from footpaths. There were many expressions of interest in developing a network of footpaths from Oswaldkirk to neighbouring villages. As a result, a small group will be formed to progress this issue.

**Mobile phone and broadband coverage** – It was suggested that, if any planning issues or proposals were received regarding improvement to mobile phone and/or broadband coverage, Oswaldkirk Parish Meeting should consider such responses as willingness to pay for an improved broadband connection.

**Preferred means of communication** – It was felt that the Parish Meeting should consider the development of a monthly newsletter to appear on the village website. Existing historical information on the website should be archived and the focus put more on day-to-day activity in the village and surrounding areas. A suggestion was also made that Oswaldkirk Parish Meeting could use the website to communicate their role in decision-making.

**Natural environment and sustainability** – General themes coming out of the questionnaire were as follows:

- Management of Chestnut Bank
- Maintenance of the verge between Oswaldkirk and Ampleforth so that it could be used as a footpath
- Attractiveness of the entrances to the village
- Speeding traffic
- State of roads and drains
- Retention/removal of trees
- Maintenance/non-maintenance of hedgerows

**Policing, emergency services and local health care** – The results indicate excellent awareness of both the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and the First Responders Scheme. It is, therefore important that this awareness be maintained.

**Village Plan Steering Committee** – Pat Thompson, Roger Dexter-Smith, Eric Dunstone, David Goodman, Del Jenkins, Caroline O'Neill and Mark Clook